

Book Review:

The Architecture of Leadership by Donald T. Phillips and Adm James M. Loy, USCG, Retired. Naval Institute Press (<http://www.usni.org/naivalinstitute/press/index.asp>), 291 Wood Road, Annapolis, Maryland 21402, 2008, 96 pages, \$16.95 (softcover), ISBN 978-1-59114-474-8.

Preparation equals performance. Those three words form the basis of *The Architecture of Leadership* and provide the reader with a primer on how to become a better leader. A quick read, this book uses the basic tenets of architecture to describe how leadership can be built from the ground up, much like building a house. The authors begin with a foundation based on character and values that leaders tend to display. They then move to laying down a floor, highlighting a drive to achieve while tempering that drive with a capacity to care. The framework of their house is built from a series of innate traits exhibited by those who tend to take on the leadership mantle. Filling in this framework is a list of acquired skills necessary in completing the “house.” Covering this framework is the ceiling of opportunity—the architecture of the house is of no value unless the leader has the opportunity to tie everything together. Finally, the author’s research culminates with the roof of the house, signifying performance, bringing all the components together and succeeding where others may have failed.

Although this sounds like it could be a rather dry read, the authors do an excellent job of weaving throughout the book historical examples of past great leaders who have exemplified a particular trait or ability. All of the chapters include interesting and enjoyable highlights in the form of quotations attributed to those leaders, each of which has relevance to its own chapter and connects to the others. One of my favorites is from Adm Grace Hopper: “You manage things, you lead people.” How many people reading this review have felt they were subject to just the opposite kind of leader? The book culminates in a story about the US Coast Guard’s response to Hurricane Katrina and the ways that response demonstrated successful application of the myriad facets comprising leadership found in *The Architecture of Leadership*.

Donald T. Phillips and Adm James M. Loy are both eminently qualified to speak on the topic of leadership. Phillips has published numerous books on leadership, perhaps best known for *Lincoln on Leadership: Executive Strategies for Tough Times* (Warner Books, 1992), a staple of professional military education for years. Admiral Loy has practical experience as a leader, having served more than 45 years in federal service and reaching the pinnacle of his military service as commandant of the Coast Guard. He also served as deputy secretary for the Department of Homeland Security and has spoken extensively about leadership.

Well laid out, the book follows a logical sequence that anyone can relate to: the building of a house. The chapters walk readers rapidly through the book, and it is over before they even realize it. One can almost describe the book as a checklist of those traits that a leader can work on to help create a recipe for success. The examples relate well to the topic at hand and offer the reader a glimpse into past decisions made by other great leaders worthy of emulation. Straightforward and effective in scope and applicability, *The Architecture of Leadership* has great relevance to leaders from all sectors of society, not just the military. Another must-have for any library, it provides a solid foundation for effective leadership that public, private, and nonprofit leaders will benefit from enormously.

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